

4-30-2015

The Montclarion, April 30, 2015

The Montclarion

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The Montclarion, "The Montclarion, April 30, 2015" (2015). *The Montclarion*. 1049.
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The Montclarion

The Student Voice of Montclair State University Since 1928

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Volume XCV, Issue 25

Thursday, April 30, 2015

themontclarion.org

Raising Disability Awareness on Campus

Deanna Rosa
Assistant News Editor

On a campus that prides itself on diversity and inclusion, addressing the lack of accessibility and services provided for students with disabilities has become a major concern among the Montclair State community.

Students with disabilities have finally decided to speak up and the resulting social media campaign petitioning these deficiencies on campus is quickly gaining speed, grabbing the attention of several local media outlets.

Matthew Flanagan, a second-year graduate student with Guillain-Barré syndrome, has experienced first-hand the difficulties of navigating around campus with a disability. "Besides entrances, the accessible ramp heading up to Kasser [Theater] floods out every day it rains," said Flanagan. "When this happens, maintenance blocks the entrance. Last week, instead of pushing the water away, I and several other stu-

Disability continued on Page 3



Greek Life Connects with Community

Members of organizations compete to be Greek Week Champions.

Megan Spinelli
Staff Writer

Greek Life at Montclair State is making itself known all week with the annual year-end celebration and competition. Banners with pictures from Dora the Explorer, SpongeBob SquarePants, *All That* and other television shows accompanied by the usual Greek letters line

the Student Center walls as evidence of the Greek Week activities spanning from Sunday, April 23 to Saturday, May 2.

Throughout the week, members of the Greek organizations will be competing for the title of Greek Week Champions in events aligned with the television show theme. Although the members of the Greek community are the ones participating,

Claire Fishman | *The Montclarion*

everyone is welcome to watch the festivities.

The spirited events kicked off Sunday with Meet the Greeks in the Student Center Quad, where sororities and fraternities proudly presented their letters for all to see.

"My sorority is special because the bond we have is so

Greek continued on Page 3

Students Speak Out at Tuition Hearing

Natalie Smyth
Staff Writer

In a last minute notice sent the day before, the University notified students about the date and time of the 2015-2016 Tuition Hearing. Because of this delayed announcement, the Board of Trustees decided to schedule a special meeting to allow students who missed the first meeting to make their voices heard and have any relevant questions answered.

The Board of Trustees sets the yearly tuition rate every July after the state budget is officially adopted in June. The Board holds this meeting open to all students every April to hear what the students have to say about rising costs of tuition, what their financial needs are and how the campus community can balance necessary price increases along with the need to keep college affordable.

The meeting took place on Tuesday, April 28, 2015 at 2 p.m. in Ballroom C of the Student Center, with President

Tuition continued on Page 4

Students Present at Annual Symposium



Students presented original research projects in the University's ninth annual symposium.

Photo courtesy of Mendelsson Philippe.

Natalie Smyth
Staff Writer

This year, Montclair State University held its ninth annual Student Research Symposium, where undergraduate and graduate students had the opportunity to present their own research to their fellow students, faculty and other members of the academic community.

The symposium gives students a venue to share and expand their own research while also exploring other students' research in a wide span of topics. The event was focused on the use of interdisciplinary research in order to highlight the importance of exploring issues from various perspectives rather

er than just using your own individual view. The day showed how collaboration can lead to more diverse and innovative results than one perspective does.

According to the University website, "The Symposium aims to promote interdisciplinary research and collaboration in the hope of instilling in our students the importance of exploring issues from multiple perspectives." In essence, the event strived to spark an insurgen-

ce of peer-to-peer dialogue. The symposium was divided into three different categories, including oral presentations, poster-based presentations and multimedia presentations.

Symposium continued on Page 3

Honors Requirements for Commencement to Change



Montclair State raises graduation standards for honors students.

Kristen Bryfogle | *The Montclarion*

Kristen Bryfogle
Opinion Editor

Starting this August, Montclair State University will raise its standards for graduation honors, leaving many students questioning the plausibility of their academic goals and the responsibility that the university has to inform students of major changes in academic policy.

Valid as of August 2015, the grade point average requirement for *Latin honors* will change from a minimum 3.45 to 3.7 in order to graduate with cum laude, from 3.65 to 3.8 for magna cum laude and from 3.85 to 3.9 for summa cum laude.

Both the University Senate and Provost Willard Gingerich approved the new standards in 2011, according to Gingerich. He said that the Senate formed these guidelines by researching what other institutions similar to Montclair State used as requirements for Latin honors.

The University Senate chose the implementation date of August 2015 to ensure that students on a four-year graduation path would be grandfathered in to the new policy, Gingerich said.

Yet, many students who graduate after the August cut-off were not aware of this policy change and the decision-

making process behind it. According to a survey *The Montclarion* conducted, 52.2 percent of students did not know about the change in honors before taking the survey.

Many students were upset about the changes made and the lack of student awareness about them. Catie Kunkel, a junior Health and Physical Education major, mentioned the topic to President Susan Cole in an open-forum style meeting with the Student Government Association last month. "I was confused about why this was never brought to anyone's at-

Honors continued on Page 3

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Student Invited to Study Abroad in Bangladesh

Savannah Martinez, after being awarded the Critical Language Scholarship, looks forward to studying abroad in Bangladesh this summer.

Feature, p. 7

Alexis Maciejunes: Able to graduate despite the odds

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Save the Swipes

At the end of each semester MSU Bonner Leaders, as well as Alpha Chi Rho, Sigma Sigma Sigma and Lambda Upsilon Lambda support the "Red Hawk Gives Back" program that allows students to use their extra swipes to give meals to the less fortunate.

Entertainment, p. 14

'Bacchae': Successful performance despite low budget



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European Roundup

The latest updates on the biggest European Soccer Leagues.

THE MONTCLARION

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The Montclarion is a publication of Montelican Publishing, Inc. published weekly, except during examinations, summer and winter sessions. *The Montclarion* is funded by student fees distributed by Montclair State University and incoming advertising revenue. The views expressed in the Opinion section, with the exception of the Main Editorial, do not necessarily reflect the views of *The Montclarion*.

The first issue of *The Montclarion*, then named *The Pelican*, was published on Nov. 28, 1928.

The Montclarion willingly corrects its factual errors. If you think there is mistake in a story, please call Editor-in-Chief Catherine at ext. 5230.

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Student Chosen to Study Abroad in Bangladesh



Student Savannah Martinez was awarded the Critical Language Scholarship. Photo courtesy of Mike Peters.

Jayna Gugliucci
News Editor

As the spring semester comes to a close, most students are eagerly waiting for the summer ahead where they will have the opportunity to rest and relax from the busy and hectic year school often brings. However, other members of the campus community have enrolled in summer courses both within the state as well as abroad.

Savannah Martinez was rewarded the Critical Language Scholarship on behalf of the U.S. Department of State. With a great love of language as well as interest in Asian countries, Martinez will soon come to use her skills while living in Dhaka, Bangladesh for two months over the summer.

The undergraduate student conducted research in order to select Bangladesh as the country she wished to visit. According to Martinez, a junior sociology major, “I chose Bangladesh because of [its] rich history and culture, but most importantly because of the language itself. Bangla is the seventh most spoken language in the world and, in my opinion, one of the most beautifully spoken and written languages.”

At the same time, Martinez expressed concern that not many individuals within the country itself speak English. Thus, the opportunities to learn as well as practice a language such as Bangla are some of the best; of course, the country provides an extremely immersive environment in which the language is used every day to communicate.

With her passion to learn both the language and culture of the country she studied, it appears as though Bangladesh may have

needed a student, such as Martinez, to draw attention to and educate the world on its current events.

“Another reason I chose Bangladesh is so that I can hopefully better raise awareness concerning the lack of basic human rights and dignities that women and children are stripped of each day,” said Martinez. “Literacy levels are extremely low

“Being surrounded by millions of people, many of whom live in poverty, each day is going to be a much different experience than what I am used to, but I am hoping that it will open my eyes to issues that people are forced to confront in countries around the world.”

-Savannah Martinez
Critical Language Scholarship Recipient

while issues like poverty and maternal death remain prevalent throughout the country. I hope that I can help be the voice of change for issues like these.”

Martinez is more than eager to begin an experience remarkably different than the life she currently lives, an opportunity that will only further her understanding of the world as well as her educational goals.

“I am looking forward to my visit to Bangladesh because it will give me the chance to learn a new language, try interesting new foods and interact with people from a culture so different than mine,” said Martinez. “Being surrounded by millions of people, many of whom live in poverty, each day is going to be a much different experience than what I am used to, but I am hoping that it will open my eyes to issues that people are forced to confront in countries around the world.”

While opening her eyes to the various settings of life around her, the cultural experience in which Martinez will soon come to find herself proves itself as one of a unique nature; while studying abroad, the undergraduate student will not only be learning a new language, but taking on a role in an environment quite unlike that she could have ever imagined.

“Through this culturally immersive experience, I would like to get a better understanding of people with completely different lifestyles and mentalities than my own,” said Martinez.

After graduating, Martinez hopes the program will help her discover and accomplish her goals beyond the classroom as either a Foreign Service Officer, an international student recruiter/advisor or working for a non-governmental organization.

“Even though I have never studied abroad, I have a real passion for international relations and cultural exchange and hope to dedicate the rest of my life to it,” said Martinez. “I could not be more excited that I have been given the opportunity to take my first step on my international journey to Bangladesh with the Department of State.”

Pelican Police Report



Saturday, April 18
Lot 60: Student Tehron Lee, 19, of East Orange, N.J. was arrested and charged with forgery for his involvement in an incident. Lee is scheduled to appear in Little Falls Municipal Court.

Tuesday, April 21
Bohn Hall: Non-student Roark Rodriguez, 21, of Stanhope, N.J. was charged with defiant trespassing. Rodriguez is scheduled to appear in Clifton Municipal Court.

Tuesday, April 21
Einstein Hall: Student Donte Golden, 19, of West Orange, N.J. was charged with defiant trespassing. Golden is scheduled to appear in Little Falls Municipal Court.

Wednesday, April 22
Webster Road: A student reported an incident of harassment with bias intent. This case is under investigation.

Thursday, April 23
A student reported an incident of cyber harassment while on campus. This case is under investigation.

Thursday, April 23
CarParc Diem: Non-student Vachensky Toussaint, 19, of Newark, N.J. and student Faizah Romano, 19, of Fanwood, N.J. were arrested and charged with possession of marijuana. Furthermore, Toussaint was charged with criminal trespassing. Both parties are scheduled to appear in Little Falls Municipal Court.

Friday, April 24
Gibson Hall: Students Sarah Kuper, 18, of Manasquan, N.J. and Valerie Lanza, 18, of Middletown, N.J. were arrested and charged for possession of marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Both parties are scheduled to appear in Little Falls Municipal Court.

Friday, April 24
Lot 19: Non-student Najee Ponton, 19, of Trenton, N.J. was arrested and charged with possession of marijuana. Ponton is scheduled to appear in Little Falls Municipal Court.

Saturday, April 26
Blanton Hall: A student reported an incident of sexual assault. At this time, the reporting party does not wish to pursue charges.

Anyone who has information regarding these incidents is urged to call the police station at T-I-P-S (8477). All calls are strictly confidential.

Honors: Raising the Academic Standards

Continued from page 1



Students work hard to keep up on classes and improve their GPAs.

Claire Fishman | *The Montclarion*

tention, so I wanted to ask Dr. Cole about it,” she said. “I understand that they’re trying to hold everyone up to a higher grade, but it’s unfair to the people who have been here for the past three years... After three years, you can only do so much to try to improve your GPA.”

Chelsea Johnson, a junior Psychology and Justice Studies major, took to the Internet to express her discontent over the changes. She started a petition, now at over 400 signatures, to provide an outlet for students to voice their resistance to these new standards. “For [the school] to change something that people may have been working towards and some people aren’t even aware of, is [that] fair?” Johnson asked. “To not have a formal announcement is just not professional.”

Cole and Gingerich both attributed the reasoning behind the new standards to grade inflation, a national trend in higher education.

When asked about grade inflation at Montclair State, Gingerich said, “We talk about it among the faculty and we urge the faculty to hold students to serious and rigorous standards for their grades, but there’s al-

ways pressure from the students themselves to get high GPAs.”

Dr. Sulochana Asirvatham, an Associate Professor of Classics and General Humanities, also noted that pressure for grade inflation can come from the emphasis on student enrollment and retention in the classroom. “If someone is telling you that your classes are too small and it’s because you grade too hard and you need to get bigger classes, what are you supposed to do?” she asked.

Asirvatham also attributed the increase in grade inflation to Montclair State’s focus on helping students succeed academically despite difficulties. “We don’t weed people out,” she said. “We bring people through.”

Dr. Lee Behlman, an Assistant Professor in the English Department, said that the change in graduation honors was justified by the trend of grade inflation. “If this is reflecting something that’s happened over decades,” he said, “then I suppose the change is appropriate, if [the requirement for graduation honors] hasn’t changed in a very long time.”

Students generally agreed that grade inflation exists in

higher education, with 76.1 percent surveyed identifying the phenomenon as a problem faced by the American education system and 52.2 percent admitting that they had personally been in a situation at Montclair State where they felt that a professor may have been inflating grades.

However, not all students think grade inflation is a justified reason to alter the GPA requirement. Both Kunkel and Johnson emphasized how difficult it was for them and for others to achieve their current GPAs while balancing employment and outside involvements.

When asked about what was being done at a national and institutional level to prevent grade inflation, Gringerich expressed the difficulty in finding a permanent solution to the issue. “You can’t order a change in grades,” he said. “That’s part of the freedom and authority of the faculty member and it is based on...the important relationship of the faculty member and the individual student. [It’s] the student’s responsibility to perform and the faculty member’s responsibility to judge [his or her performance].”

Disability: Petition for Change

Continued from page 1

dents were forced to walk up the hill from Red Hawk [Parking Deck]—which would seem like nothing until you realize we can only walk a couple hundred feet at a time with our walkers when wearing backpacks.”

After a fellow disabled student fell while trying to navigate University Hall this past March, Flanagan decided that it was time for change. In response, he launched the movement through Twitter to #makeMSUaccessible. In a few short months, the petition has acquired over 80 signatures as well as the support of the Chris-

uneven pavement, often for long distances. “When I need to get to the opposite side of campus but the bus can only take me to a certain building, I have to walk,” said Tiffani Waters, a senior with Multiple Sclerosis. “When the weather decides to attack me and I am left vulnerable to wicked winds, I need to be dropped off directly at the building to minimize harm to myself.”

Flanagan and those backing his campaign are strong supporters of the idea that “disability” is simply “a socially constructed phenomenon.”

“As a group, a culture and a body of students who are part of the MSU community, we can no longer tolerate being institutionally oppressed in an environment that is non-inclusive of our basic mobility needs. I and others are forced to adapt to the campus instead of immersing in it.”

-Matthew Flanagan, Graduate Student

topher & Dana Reeve Foundation and the backing of the director of the New Jersey State Disability Department.

Areas lacking sufficient accessibility include entrances to Richardson Hall, Memorial Auditorium, the Red Hawk Parking Deck and the lower-level College Hall entrances. Even the accessible doors in newer buildings, such as the University Hall entrance opposite the Student Center Annex, suffer from a lack of maintenance and are therefore frequently non-functional.

Along with issues of accessibility, students also find campus transportation to be less than satisfactory. The disabilities shuttle service only travels between a few main buildings on campus, forcing impaired students to walk the hills and

In venues that are universally designed without taking into consideration the varying population which might frequent these locations, even the smallest of physical impairments turn into crippling disabilities. “As a group, a culture and a body of students who are part of the MSU community, we can no longer tolerate being institutionally oppressed in an environment that is non-inclusive of our basic mobility needs. I and others are forced to adapt to the campus instead of immersing in it,” stated Flanagan.

Without accommodations for these types of students, many feel that the university implicitly supports society’s systematic disablement of those suffering from impairments, and the resulting campaign to make MSU accessible plans to change that.

Symposium: Recognizing Student Research

Continued from page 1

Many categories had research from a wide variety of different fields, from pedagogy to ecology to chemistry, and included a wide array of theoretical and practical research projects, allowing for students from various academic backgrounds to take part.

According to Dr. Willard Gingerich, the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, “Even more satisfying and rewarding is the challenge of tackling a problem with a toolbox of multiple methodologies, with an inter- or multi-disciplinary approach, either by mastering several different disciplines yourself or by combining your own skills and efforts with colleagues trained in other disciplines.”

-Dr. Willard Gingerich,
Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs

binning your own skills and efforts with colleagues trained in other disciplines.”

The event was held on Sunday, April 26 in University Hall from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Along with presenting research, participants had the opportunity to socialize with other attendees during breakfast and lunch. At the end of the day, some students won awards and academic scholarships for their projects.

Travis Gross, a junior Political Science major, conducted a research project called “Code Villain Approach: Understand-

ing the ‘Ends’ of Terrorism” and was advised by Political Science professor Tony Spanakos. He presented his research during the Oral and Multimedia Presentations in a group centered on terrorism, brutality and trauma.

According to Gross, “Our group had a good discussion and I learned a lot from other people’s research. The symposium encouraged students to research what they actually find interesting and understand how that work can have a bigger application outside of the classroom.”

The Terrorism and Brutality panel had a total of five research

projects, all of which were oral presentations. Each student had 10 minutes to present their work, summarize their findings and share their conclusions. They had five additional minutes to answer questions from their fellow students and professors.

Overall, the event had an amalgam of different types of research. Along with giving students the opportunity to study, it provided them with an open environment in which to exchange their ideas and perspectives with one another.

Greek: Organizations Present a Week of Fun

Continued from page 1



Greek Organizations come together in an annual year-end celebration.

Claire Fishman | *The Montclarion*

much more than just a sisterhood,” said Kelly Potts, a senior and sister of Sigma Delta Tau. “We’re all such great friends and work well together for Greek Week and even beyond that.”

The 35 sororities and fraternities welcomed those who are looking to join in the fun of Greek Life. One sorority that was present for the events was Omega Phi Chi. “We embrace the diversity amongst our sisters and that’s what brings us together and our different cultures and our genuine love for our sisterhood,” said Lesa Diggs, a senior and sister of Omega Phi Chi.

Another excited member of Greek Life is Mike Majekodunmi, a senior and president of Alpha Phi Delta. “Our fraternity is special because we are the founding fathers of this chapter at this school,” said Majekodunmi. “It is also the only Italian heritage fraternity in the country.”

On Monday, Greek Life members represented their re-

spective organizations with colorful letters on shirts and jackets as they sat in the Student Center ballrooms. They clapped and cheered as their knowledge was tested in trivia.

The Greeks moved into the Recreation Center on Tuesday with Olympic-style games including volleyball, relay races, basketball, scooter races and tug-of-war. Wednesday continued with flag football in the Student Center Quad, where they were “Tackling AIDS.”

On Thursday, members showed off their baking skills with a cake bake in the Student Center Ballroom at 1 p.m. Then came the event both Potts and Diggs were most excited for: the campus-wide scavenger hunt, starting at 4 p.m. in the Student Center Quad.

“[I was] super excited for the scavenger hunt because it’s so great learning more about MSU and our campus in a fun way that incorporates all of Greek life,” said Potts.

On Friday, participants will take to Yogi Berra Stadium

from 4 p.m. to 4 a.m. for Relay For Life, an overnight event dedicated to raising money and awareness about cancer.

The Greek Week Talent Show will celebrate the end of Greek Week at 1 p.m. on Saturday at the Kasser Amphitheater, an event that gives Greek members the opportunity to show off their best skills. Greek members will represent their letters with dancing, singing and other talents.

“I’m most excited for the talent show,” said Majekodunmi. He and his brothers have been practicing their performance all week in their Village apartment and are sure they will impress the audience. Everyone is encouraged to fill the amphitheater and see Alpha Phi Delta and other Greek organizations show off their creative talents.

The week culminates to what all the sororities and fraternities are competing, playing and performing for: the title of Greek Week Champions. Head over to one of the many events to see who comes out with the win.

School of Communication Welcomes Kurt Anderson



Popular radio voice Kurt Anderson spoke at Terhune Journalism Lecture.

Photo courtesy of Mike Peters.

Jolie Higazi
Staff Writer

Kurt Anderson, best known as the host for WNYC’s radio program *Studio 360* and co-creator of *Spy* magazine, presented at the Montclair State University Terhune Journalism Lecture in the John J. Cali School of Music on April 23.

Moderated by Merrill Brown, the founder of MSNBC.com and director of MSU’s School of Communication and Media, Anderson’s lecture involved a wide range of topics such as the future of journalism, the effect of technology on society and the peculiarities of the present generation.

Anderson, a *New York Times* best-selling author, expressed his concerns regarding the lack of consensus in the present generation about public issues compared to those in past decades. He said that we are living in a society where the rich are only getting richer while the poor are getting poorer and that

public media has a role in providing “checks and balances” to the control and influence bigger media corporations have.

In reference to the evolving digital world, Anderson said, “It’s the best of times and it’s the worst of times.” While Anderson admits that it is a benefit to have Facebook friends and Twitter followers share information easily that he might never have heard or read before, he also said that technology has created such extreme polarization in public opinion that it may never be able to bounce back again.

Anderson commented on the polarization that Internet search engines and social media tend to enable and compared it to going to a library where all the books that portray a different opinion than your own are hidden.

In a quick response to Brown’s questioning about if he had any solutions to these bigger picture issues, Anderson laughed and fired back a quick

“no.” “The period of flux is extraordinary,” he said. “[But] it seems like we can do better and used to do better.”

In response, people need to have a commitment to a fundamental search for the truth, he said, in spite of there being an innate confirmation bias in people in which we tend to focus on information that only confirms what we already believe.

In terms of advice for new journalists, Anderson offered a few words of wisdom to a journalism class before the lecture. “Go for what excites you,” he said. “You’re not on a ‘no-exit car’ for the rest of your life.” He says that the amateur spirit of doing things that you are genuinely passionate and excited about is far too underrated.

Anderson is the author of *True Believers*, *Turn of the Century* and *Heyday*, which was a *New York Times* bestseller. He has written for the *New Yorker*, the *New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, *Time*, *Mother Jones*. Anderson also has written for television, film and theater.

Tuition: Cole Opens Dialogue

Continued from page 1

Susan Cole, Vice President of Campus Life Karen Pennington, the Board of Trustees and their Student Representatives, along with Academic Advising, Financial Aid and Student Accounts to assist students with any concerns they have about their financial situation.

At the meeting President Cole explained to the students the details of why tuition goes up every year and where the extra money goes. She also understood the students’ specific concerns about rising costs and affordability. She spoke at length about all the different payment demands the univer-

Every student who attended the meeting had the opportunity to speak to Cole and the Board; after the meeting, they could speak to representatives from different departments about how to manage the possible tuition increase for the next academic year.

Rebecca Klein, a sophomore General Humanities major, attended the hearing for the first time this year because of her serious financial concerns. According to Klein, “I came to the meeting because I could barely afford to stay in school this year. I have a job but I don’t get paid enough to fund even half

“People who work in a career and do a good job should have salary increases, and they should have benefits. You will want those things when you’re working and I want you to have those things when you’re working.”

-Susan Cole,
President of Montclair State University

sity had in order to show the students where the money goes and how difficult it is to keep tuition at a low, stable price.

According to President Cole, “We look at what do we absolutely have to pay for, so we look at the mandatory increases that we have, things like negotiated contracts that have salary increases in them--and by the way, they should. People who work in a career and do a good job should have salary increases and they should have benefits. You will want those things when you’re working and I want you to have those things when you’re working.”

tuition and my mom doesn’t have any money to help. If tuition rates go up, I may have to drop out before graduation just because I don’t have enough money to pay for school.”

The Board listened to each student’s concerns and gave them the opportunity to respond. They made sure to listen to each student and were responsive to their questions and concerns. This second special tuition meeting gave more students the option of speaking to the board, allowing both students and the Board to understand each others’ concerns about future costs.



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Feature

Alexis Maciejunes: *Able to graduate despite the odds*

Kevin Camilo
Contributing Writer

Getting out of work at 5 p.m., Alexis Maciejunes only had a few minutes to go home and check on her mother before speeding to school to make it to her night class.

Having to worry about not just your own life but someone else's would be tough for anyone. Maciejunes was forced to juggle going to school, working to support her family and being the sole caretaker of her sick mother, all while trying to live a regular teenage life. "I was a sophomore in college," Maciejunes said. "I just remember my whole world pretty much coming to a stop."

Maciejunes was only 19 when she found out her mother, Patricia, was diagnosed with rectal cancer. With her sister living

away with her fiancé and going to law school, Maciejunes was all alone in her battle to keep her and her mother's lives going. Food shopping, laundry and cooking were just a few of the new responsibilities she was forced to take on.

Her sister, Nikki, was surprised with how well she did being so young. "Alex really impressed me with how well she dealt with such a tough situation," said her sister. "At that age I don't even think I'd be able to handle that the way she did."

Working at Bogota Savings Bank and studying at Montclair State University while taking care of her mother, Maciejunes already had a lot on her plate, but all that soon caught up with her. Stressed and behind

on school work, she decided to take time off in order to better focus on her finances and her mother.

All her mother wanted was for her to finish school and she was heartbroken and mad to find out that her daughter had stopped going to school to take care of her. "Being stubborn and independent, I hate being taken care of and having others worry about me, but I couldn't be [more] proud of the woman she has grown up to be, even if she did have to grow up a little quicker than others," said Patricia.

One semester off of school eventually turned into a year off. Maciejunes knew how hard it would be if she added school back into the mix, so she

had no problem taking more time off because she knew she would eventually go back and finish. After nine months, her mother was finally cancer free and Maciejunes' life was able to go back to normal. She went back to school and was able to have more of a social life now that her mother was gradually getting better and starting to go back to work.

Maciejunes thought all was well, until a year later when her mother had a bad accident where she slipped on ice and broke her ankle and shoulder. After the fall, her mother went to a rehabilitation center where they helped her get better. Now, months later, she is able to walk again and go back to work. Maciejunes said, "She's really self-

less when it comes to that stuff. She wants to make sure I'm doing okay with taking care of her and still continuing my life."

Now set to graduate in May 2016, Maciejunes is looking forward to commencement and starting a career. She also said "My sister is now a lawyer and I'm studying finance, so my biggest goal is to graduate and help support me and my mom."

She still looks back at the last few years and although they were extremely tough on her, she's glad it made her grow up and made her stronger as she hopes to use that in her future career.

Cathy Brown: *Unlikely career change to a professor*

Priscilla Gonzalez
Contributing Writer

If you were a student in professor Cathy Brown's Child Advocacy class, then you know that she has been a veteran instructor for the past six years. What you might be surprised to hear from her is the following: "I was a college dropout, I was a single mom. I was pregnant at 20, had three kids by 25 and divorced by 27."

This all happened to Brown about 30 years ago when her husband abandoned her and her three kids in a parking lot near Newark International Airport. She explained her shock and confusion as she was standing in that parking lot with tons of suitcases, a six-month-old, a two-year-old and a five-year-old. They were all moving back from Germany.

"I remember so vividly thinking to myself: You know what? It's not going to be pretty, but if I could get us home from here, we'd be okay," said Brown, who moved to Montclair. That was the original plan

after her head stopped spinning enough to think: "well, this is where I want to live." Montclair is where she raised her kids and she is now a Professor of Child Advocacy at Montclair State University.

Looking back, Brown explained what it was like trying to live on her own with a family to support and reminisces about the moment she decided that she wanted to do something with her life.

She explained that she was not ready to go back to work since her children were still in preschool, but that she wanted to do something that had nothing to do with kids.

She heard that her town was searching for volunteer firefighters. She says that it was really fun, but encountered a ton of sexism and hostility from the rest of the firefighters for her gender, background and race. In return, Brown got a lawyer and threatened to record a meeting "and everything

changed like that," according to Brown. With the success of recording that injustice and another case of a man who put fire to a building under code, she had two things that drove her into the law. Brown claimed that seeing the success of the legal system and the failure of the legal system is what led to her to becoming a lawyer.

Brown then applied to, "every law school within a two-hour commute." She had no idea what school she would get into, but knew that she was really good at standardized tests. She said, "I aced the LSATs and got one of the highest scores in the country."

Brown not only got into every school she applied to but was offered fellowships before she even finished the school's applications all because of what Brown called "those scores." She went into Columbia with realistic expectations of graduating law school in just three years, which she describes as

one of her biggest accomplishments.

However, especially with her children, that achievement didn't last too long for Brown, as she got a job at a big law firm that occupied most of her time. She explained how her daughter had made it to be on the varsity tennis team in high school and she had to miss every single match because she had to stay at work. She expressed how she was good at a lot of things but being a lawyer didn't turn out to be one of them.

She then saved money, stopped working and decided that she wasn't going to do this anymore and went to "find another career," one that she enjoyed.

"My father had been a lawyer and hated it and had become a college professor and loved it, and I had a feeling I would too," said Brown. She started again by applying to every college that was looking for a professor to teach in any

subject. That was when she got a call six years ago from Robert McCormick, who said, "School starts in three days and we just lost our teacher for Child Abuse & Neglect. Do you think you can teach that?" and it turned out that she loved it.

Brown said that if she wouldn't have put herself through all the drama of having a job that she hated for 10 years, that she would have never gotten this job. That seems to be the most rewarding to her. "If I do a good job, like if I teach a course and people learn stuff, the world is a better place," said Brown. All she wanted was to do something where she made a difference.

She has advice for people in her shoes: "Just because it isn't easy doesn't mean [it will only happen in your] wildest dreams." Her life is now filled with fabulous children, a grandson, a wonderful husband and a home in Montclair.

A Legacy and Symbol Retires

Teanna Owens
Contributing Writer



Photo Courtesy of Teanna Owens

English professor Dr. Sharon A. Lewis, now retiring after two decades at Montclair State University, is preparing to ride her last train from Maryland.

Lewis, who was born and raised in Stone Harbor, N.J., said she moved to Maryland not long after she began teaching at Montclair State in 1993.

Rather than relocating to a closer institution, Lewis has remained a dedicated faculty member of the Red Hawk community for over 20 years. Throughout those years, she has been a symbol of inspira-

tion for the students in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

"Professor Lewis inspired me because she was so passionate about literature," said Christine Ham, an English major and graduating senior. "She made me more conscious of issues of race, class and gender and how they intersect with each other."

As a young girl who grew up with a father who was an avid reader and a mother who was an elementary school librarian, Lewis naturally loved learning and reading.

"I was an odd child," said Lewis. "While everybody was outside playing, I was inside reading books."

When asked what she liked to read, Lewis said she enjoyed novels and poems, also adding that the works of Langston Hughes, Edna St. Vincent Millay and Henry Dumas were some of her favorites.

"My mom used to take me to the library every Saturday," said Lewis, who also tells of how many of her grammar school teachers predicted that she would be an English teacher. Her love for being in the classroom and her desire for

learning new things is made clear, as the soon-to-be former English professor spent several years in school before finally graduating with her doctorate and applying for an open teaching position at Montclair State University.

Lewis earned her B.A. in English from Rutgers-New Brunswick and went on to attend Rutgers-Camden, where she obtained her M.A. in American Literature and Creative Writing. Later, she returned to Rutgers-New Brunswick for her doctorate and it is there that she received her Ph.D. in American Literature with a focus in African American women writers.

"I loved learning. I loved being in school," said Lewis. "But there weren't any more courses for me to take," she said with a smile. "I had taken them all."

Only weeks away from retiring, Lewis said that she will miss learning from her students and colleagues. When asked what will she miss the least, she said, "students not reading," and later said that her biggest challenge as a teacher was getting students more involved in the literature so that the works would remain with them.

"Her retiring is going to be a great loss to the department," said Dr. Wendy Nielsen, Chairperson of the English Department. "She's a great teacher and she's the only faculty member in the department who specializes in African American literature. Her leaving is going to be very difficult because students are not going to have a diverse experience."

Students such as Juan Ouvia, Nadia Efa, Jaimee Laurie and Allison Faccenda shared their disappointment with Professor Lewis's retirement. "I don't want her to retire," said Efa. "She knows what she's talking about. The school is losing a great professor."

Ouvia, an English major in his junior year, said, "I probably won't find another teacher like her. I don't know other professors that would advocate about critical race." Ouvia is currently studying with Lewis for his third time. "I would take her a million times if I could."

Laurie and Faccenda, who are English majors in their junior year, are also currently studying with Professor Lewis for their third time. They said Lewis's knowledge and teach-

ing of topics on Marxism, feminism and capitalism are what inspired them to retake courses with her.

Although Lewis taught for the English Department, she was also an inspiration for students outside of the English major. Joseph Vecchione, a Classics major and Women and Gender studies minor, said Lewis "challenges your thinking process and your views. Her Women Prose Writers course has made my minor so much more interesting."

Lewis, on the other hand, admits that she is ready to retire. When asked of her plans after retirement, the English professor said that she will be going whale watching in Argentina, getting a dog, exercising and taking piano lessons.

An advocate for independent thinking, Lewis said that her goal as a teacher was to encourage her students to question everything. "This should be the goal of all teaching," she said.

Finals Fashion

Jessica Mahmoud
Staff Writer

This is the last issue of *The Montclarion* before this year’s graduation issue, which means one thing: Finals are right around the corner. While there is still some time left to relax before we all sit down for exams, this is the time people tend to opt for sweatpants. But there are other options to stay comfortable in these stressful times. I hope this gives you some inspiration, and best of luck on your exams!



Top, tights and headband: Forever 21
Skirt: Cotton On
Boots: Traffic

Some people might say that tights are not that comfortable, but it’s really all a matter of preference. I have high hopes that soon tights won’t even be necessary with the weather getting warmer. Skater skirts and basic tops are super comfortable for sitting through exams or for those long study sessions in the library.



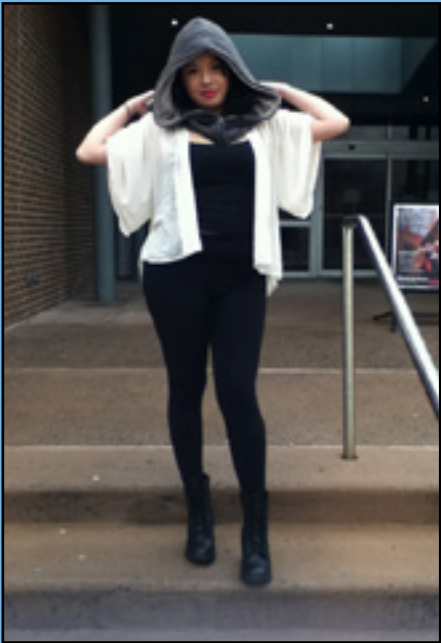
Dress: Forever 21
Sweater: England
Tights: Target
Shoes: Kohl’s
Sunglasses: Urban Outfitters

Despite having tights, this outfit is very comfortable. Hopefully sweaters will be put away soon, but layering them over dresses is a great away to stay warm in chilly spring weather. This outfit would also look great with kneesocks. All the cotton pieces are cozy and soft, making them similar to lounge wear, which is ideal for finals week.



Dress and socks: Victoria’s Secret
Jacket: Old Navy
Shoes: Converse

Cotton dresses like this one are perfect for finals because they are easy to throw on and super-comfortable, but still fashionable. A simple one like this paired with fun socks, a light jacket and Converse is perfect for spring. It’s simple but still stylish. If you’re not into denim jackets, opt for a light cardigan to stay comfortable.



Tank and tights: Target
White kimono: TJ Maxx
Hood: boutique in Soho
Boots: Forever 21

Pants are definitely still an option for finals week and are probably preferred over skirts and dresses. Statement pieces like this kimono and hood are a great way to amp up a simple outfit. They are both unique and easy to throw on on your way out the door to your exam. Combat boots or even heels finish off the look.

The
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FEATURE

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Opinion

Save the Swipes



Melisa Vallovera | The Montclarion

At the end of each semester, there is a mad rush to the dining halls and retail eateries to use every last swipe and flex dollars before they expire. Any meal plan swipes and flex dollars that are left behind at the end of the spring semester do not carry over to the new school year, causing many students to lose a lot of the money that they invested in their meal plans. With finances so tight for students, who often work several jobs and take out loans to pay for tuition, room and board and books, any penny saved is a penny that can be reinvested in a student’s education.

For this reason, we think it’s time for Montclair State University to start seriously considering refunding unused swipes and flex dollars at the end of the semester, or at the

very least, allowing them to be carried over from semester to semester and year to year.

Upon acceptance to Montclair State University, all resident students are forced to purchase a meal plan that can cost as much as \$2,355. For resident students with less than 30 credits, there are limitations placed on the meal plans they may purchase. Those students are required to purchase one of the four Red Hawk Unlimited meal plans that promise unlimited meal swipes. For resident students who have more than 30 credits, there is a larger array of options ranging from a 32 Block Plan, providing 32 meal swipes, to the Red Hawk Unlimited Platinum Plus meal plan, providing unlimited meal swipes.

Unlike Red Hawk Dollars, the meal swipes featured in the mandatory resident meal plans

do not carry over from year to year, or even semester to semester, as Flex Dollars do. After each semester, students lose all of their remaining prepaid meal swipes. At \$6.20 a swipe, the amount of money students lose at the end of the semester quickly adds up. Consequently, on-campus eateries become overcrowded as students try to buy enough food so that they do not lose their money in swipes.

Some students have so many blocks and flex dollars left over at the end of the semester that they often donate food that they obtain through swipes to the less fortunate through the “Red Hawk Gives Back” program. We think it’s great that organizations on campus give students the opportunity to put their excess meal plan to good use, yet many students spend a lot of money on their meal

plans, and those leftover dollars could be funneled back into their education—to buy books or to pay for tuition—instead of only being able to be donated to prevent waste.

Instead of donating swipes, spending them on cases of chips and soda or having them mysteriously vanish into thin air, it would be nice if Montclair State University would allow swipes to be carried over from semester to semester or even refund students for any unused swipes.

Although it seems unlikely that Montclair State would refund money to their students for swipes, it does not seem like it would take much effort to just extend the life of meal swipes.

It would give students who are residing on campus for the first time the opportunity to feel out the meal plans and allow

them to see what is the right meal plan for them. Instead of buying an overwhelming amount of swipes that will later prove to be useless, students would be able to save them for a later occasion.

Residents would rather save their meal swipes at the end of the semester, knowing they will roll over to the next semester, than ending the semester with massive amounts of food just because all of their precious swipes will soon be gone.

Allowing meal swipes to carry over from semester to semester or year to year may prevent waste and students would much rather prefer to save their swipes and their money. With tuition increasing every year, saving meal swipes would be able to save money, waste, and a lot of frustration on the behalf of the students.



Thumbs Up

Players’ Rent

Student Research Symposium

Last week of classes

Thumbs Down



Nepal earthquake

Baltimore riots

Finals week

Question of the Week:

How do you plan on preventing stress during the upcoming finals week?

“Just focusing on graduation and all the good things that are going to happen after graduation.”

Angelina Barkho
Senior,
Finance

“I am going to focus on one class at a time and try to not cram all my studying into one day.”

Jack Huang,
Freshman,
Geoscience

“I have no plans for that. It is inevitable”

Clarissa Pascual
Freshman,
History

“Since I only have 2 exams, I plan to divide my days and materials in order to reduce my stress.”

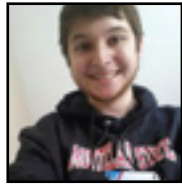
Dionne Ubungen
Sophomore,
Biology

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Trans-Pacific Problems

Trans-Pacific Partnership leave many unsure of what the US is getting into



DAN FALKENHEIM
COLUMNIST

The Trans-Pacific Partnership was once again brought into the national spotlight, as the Senate is set to vote on whether or not to grant the president fast track negotiating authority.

The debate over giving the president the power to present the deal with no opportunities for amendments has caused far-left Senators, such as Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, to directly oppose Barack Obama’s trade agenda.

It’s okay if you haven’t heard much about the deal – most Americans haven’t. In fact, the first U.S. Congressman wasn’t able to review the text of the deal until five years after the United States joined the negotiations in 2008.

For skeptics of the trade agreement, including myself, it seems awfully odd that Obama has the full support of the Republicans with almost no conservative criticizing Obama’s trade agenda. That, coupled with the secrecy that has shrouded these negotiations, has given enough fuel to Democrats to oppose Obama staunchly on both the issue of Trade Promotion Authority and the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The TPA and the TPP are separate debates but concern the same topic. Giving Obama Trade Promotion Authority would allow him to “fast track” the Trans-Pacific Partnership, meaning that Congress would only be able to vote “yea” or “nay” on the bill with no chance to propose amendments.

Proponents of the fast track argue that it makes trade deals easier to pass

and that it gives foreign governments reason to believe that the U.S. Congress won’t make changes to the items that the President is negotiating. I’m somewhat sympathetic to these arguments; however, fast tracking any trade deal essentially limits the ability for the legislative branch to check the powers of the executive branch. Additionally, the fast track route removes all public debate from the issue.

Public debate is crucial for a democracy to function properly. I know, encouraging public debate is really going out on a limb and is a radical idea, but this is where the issues of the fast track and Trans-Pacific Partnership begin to merge.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership has been negotiated at some level of secrecy, which isn’t unusual. The trade deal involves 12 countries that are responsible for 26 percent of the world’s trade and 40 percent of the world’s gross domestic product, according to the *Washington Post*. It’d be unwise for a deal of this magnitude to not go through the rigors of public debate.

Although members of Congress can now view the text of the deal, the public cannot. All that we know about the Trans-Pacific Partnership has come from documents that were leaked to WikiLeaks. From my perspective and understanding of the deal, it seems to further the interests of global corporations while doing little to protect consumers.

Two of the biggest points of contention of the deal include debates over intellectual property provisions and investor-state arbitration. Simply, the TPP would implement intellectual property provisions that put

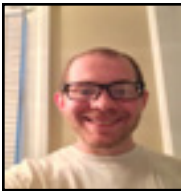
extremely strict copyright laws in place. The provisions that would be put in place would harm the freedom of the internet and the hurt the ability for other countries to have access to affordable generic brand medicine, all in favor of corporate and pharmaceutical profits.

Investor-state arbitration is the ability for an investor to sue a company if they violate the terms of the treaty. This is fine if it isn’t exploited, but I don’t have confidence that the deal does enough to prevent global corporations from exploiting it. In the worst case scenario, it gives global corporations undue power to sue countries if the corporation feel that government regulations hurt their profits.

Referring to both the Trade Promotion Authority and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, House Speaker John Boehner said, “Trade is good for America. It helps strengthen our economy, create more American jobs [...]” While there are parts of the deal that are good, the secrecy and scope of the deal make me doubt Boehner’s usual political rhetoric.

Trade is good for America, but public debate of a trade deal of this magnitude is even more important for the continuing success of our democratic system. The TPA and the TPP leave the public out of the debate and the impacts amount to global corporate giveaways. A deal like this cannot be fully supported until there is more openness about what it truly entails.

Dan Falkenheim, a Journalism major, is in his first year as a columnist for The Montclarion.



BRENDAN KANE
COLUMNIST

Any-one who has taken even a high school level macroeconomics class knows that under certain circumstances and sociopolitical climates, free trade is beneficial to all parties involved. Free trade or near non-existent trade tariffs allow for one of the most important, if not the most important, mechanisms in international markets to flourish: specialization.

Specialization allows countries to focus on industries that give them a comparative advantage over other countries—for example, producing goods at a lower opportunity cost and trading with other countries for goods they don’t specialize in. So free trade is a good thing, right?

Then if the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) intends to promote and ensure free trade among signatory nations, why is it possibly the worst international treaty ever conceived? The answer is secrecy and investor-state arbitration.

The Trade Acts of 1974 and 2002 created and reauthorized a little-known executive power, called fast track negotiating authority, specifically for international trade agreements. Fast tracking effectively allows the President to author and negotiate international trade agreements that can either be approved or not by Congress but cannot be amended or filibustered by them.

If you’re well versed in the functions of our government and the separation of powers, some alarm bells should be going off. If you’re not, simply put, the regula-

tion of interstate and foreign trade is vested solely within the Legislative branch.

The good thing is this little-known and even less used executive power expired in 2007 with the expiration of the Trade Act of 2002, except it didn’t.

The Trade Act of 2002 may have expired but the fast track provision can still be used on negotiations that began before the act expired. The TPP is under that exemption because it has been in talks beginning in 2005. President Obama has exploited this technicality to keep members of Congress perpetually in the dark about the specifics of the TPP. The actual text of the agreement has yet to be released by the Obama Administration to members of Congress and the public at large. The only specific public knowledge comes from various leaks.

The standard response regarding the secrecy surrounding the TPP is best said by US Trade Representative Ron Kirk: “to preserve negotiating strength and to encourage our partners to be willing to put issues on the table they may not otherwise.” However, that hasn’t stopped the Obama Administration from consulting with some of the largest corporations—such as the MPAA, Halliburton, Comcast and Chevron—behind closed doors.

Even more frightening than the President pushing a trade treaty that Congress hasn’t even seen is the TPP’s Investment Chapter, which allows for investor-state arbitration. If the TPP were to be implemented, all signatory nations must align their domestic laws with the regulations set by the TPP. If country A does not conform to some laws and an investor from

country B invests in country A, the investor from country B will have the ability to sue country A for loss of expected future profits. Yes, you read that right; if the TPP becomes a reality a corporation or sole investor now has the legal right to sue a whole country.

Luckily, corporations have to wait for the TPP to become a reality before they can sue countries; oh wait, they already have.

In 2013, Eli Lilly and Company sued Canada for \$500,000,000 because, they argued a domestic Canadian law ran contrary to regulations in the North American Free Trade Agreement. They claimed that Canada did not guarantee fair and equal treatment to foreign investors and lost \$500 million in future profits because of Canadian laws.

While the lawsuit has yet to be settled (and probably won’t be for some time now), it exemplifies a huge problem that the TPP poses. If the TPP were to be implemented, frivolous lawsuits such as Eli Lilly’s could become much more common, with the majority of the costs pushed onto citizens.

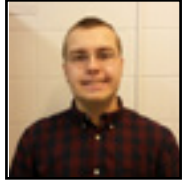
Tort law in our country is a complete mess and results in more frivolous lawsuits than most developed nations. Do we really want to open that can of worms on the rest of the world too?

Brendan Kane, a History and Political Science major, is in his first year as a columnist for The Montclarion.



Respect Dwindles in Greek Organizations

Students face fraternity expulsion after disrespecting veterans



NICHOLAS DA SILVA
COLUMNIST

Two months after the racist chants controversy with the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity in Oklahoma, another fraternity has brought about controversy, and the misconduct is just as bad if not worse than what transpired in Oklahoma.

The Zeta Beta Tau fraternity from the University of Florida is currently under investigation for allegations that fraternity members committed various acts of lewd and disrespectful behavior towards a group of disabled military veterans who were part of the Wounded Warriors Project.

Linda Cope, organizer of the Warrior Beach retreat, released the following statement explaining what exactly the fraternity was doing to the veterans: “People were urinating off the balconies, throwing up in the elevators, making suggestive and sexual comments about veterans with their service dogs and derogatory and suggestive comments about their wives.”

Other accusations include fraternity members spitting on

veterans, pouring beer on them and pulling down American flags that were up at the resort.

The reason the fraternity was even at the Warrior Beach resort in the first place was because Zeta Beta Tau members from both the University of Florida and Emory University in Georgia were hosting their spring formals at the resort. The University of Florida and the Zeta Beta Tau International Office have both apologized to the veterans group for the incident and three members of the fraternity from the University of Florida have already faced expulsion from the fraternity.

Why has it become such a problem for fraternities to be able to have fun in a manner that does not come at anyone else’s expense? Fraternities are a staple of the college experience that should be looked upon by society with pride and excitement, not with dismay and dread over what misfortunes they will construct next.

The whole purpose of a fraternity is for a college student to meet new people and possibly try new things. Yes, it is meant to be fun, but there is no reason for any fraternity member to spit or urinate on a war veteran in order to attain that sense of

fun. College students are supposed to gain wisdom and a newfound maturity when partaking in a fraternity. Yet, with this latest display of deplorable misconduct, it is becoming more and more evident that some students only gain more immaturity when they become part of a fraternity.

More importantly, where is the fun in being in college and getting yourself in serious trouble for misconduct you commit in a fraternity? The three kids who were expelled from the fraternity are going to find the rest of their college careers significantly damaged even if they are not expelled from the school altogether.

So many college kids and fraternity members ruin their futures by making stupid and reckless decisions like the fraternity members of Zeta Beta Tau; it is lamentable that in 2015, there are still college kids who cannot understand that it is wrong to get drunk and treat war veterans with complete disrespect.

I hate to sound like a broken record, but in this situation, it needs to be said; the disabled veterans that those fraternity members spit on and verbally and physically abused de-

serve far better treatment than what they were given. It is bad enough that the soldiers had to endure great burdens and sacrifices during their time in battle; for them to be mistreated by college kids when they are trying to enjoy a much deserved vacation is completely unacceptable.

Those veterans went to war so that those fraternity kids could enjoy the freedoms of going to what college they wanted and having fun in their fraternities.

The only reason that I am writing this piece now is because the service of those soldiers has protected the rights and freedoms that I have as a college student in the United States of America.

I find no act more disrespectful and disgusting than for someone to spit in the face of a soldier who went to fight to protect their rights and ensure their safety. To spit on a soldier and pull down American flags is essentially spitting in the face of America and every citizen who appreciates and respects the sacrifices that their army has made for them.

The University of Florida is currently investigating to see if anyone else from the chapter

of the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity was involved with these actions, which will more than likely turn out to be the case. There is no doubt that this will not be the last time we hear about a major incident involving a college fraternity in the news.

The frequency of these incidents involving Greek organizations makes me wonder what can possibly be done to bring all of this to a stop. If students being expelled is not enough for other college students to realize the errors in fraternity misconduct, then what will? I do not want to believe that it will have to come down to colleges having to end Greek Life altogether, because that would be severely unfair to fraternity students who behave the way they are supposed to.

I myself can offer no real solution, but maybe if enough people work together to find a way to resolve this issue, then fraternities will become something for colleges to be proud of once again.

Nicholas Da Silva, a Journalism major, is in his first year as a columnist for The Montclarion.

Concerning Editorials and Columns
Main editorials appear on the first page of the Opinion section. They are unsigned articles that represent the opinion of the editorial board on a particular issue. Columns are written by individuals and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Montclarion staff.

‘Rent’

Players rock latest production of ‘Rent’

Kristen Bryfogle
Opinion Editor



Photos courtesy of TomRussoPhotography

Due to the success of *Rent*’s theatrical run, starting in 1996 and its 2005 film adaptation, taking on the Jonathan Larson rock opera can be an intimidating endeavor. The prestige of past productions, coupled with the heavy content matter of the show, make it a challenge for any theater group to take on. But Players’ production of *Rent*, performed over the past weekend, both lived up to preceding performances and succeeded in recreating the show with its own personal flavor. The singing and acting was emotive, impeccable and most importantly, unique to each individual actor and how he or she wanted to portray Larson’s characters.

With a large cast of main characters sharing the lead roles, it’s important for each actor to infuse their singing and speech with each individual character’s personal qualities; Mimi must be adventurous, Roger stubborn

and melancholy, Maureen wantonly confident, Joanne type-A, Angel unconditionally kind, Collins humanitarian and Mark the wandering observer of the lives progressing around him. Each actor expressively incorporated the idiosyncrasies of these characters, while not merely imitating the performances of stars like Idina Menzel and Adam Pascal who are so well-known for their roles.

I loved that Meg Foley, who played Maureen, made “Over the Moon” her own and Eric Craft, who played Collins, went into falsetto during “I’ll Cover You (Reprise),” embracing his own vocal range and skill during the song which is emotionally demanding. Even the ensemble was able to incorporate intense emotions into their precise singing, making company songs like “La Vie Bohème,” “Another Day” and “Seasons of Love” some of the strongest.

The costuming, makeup and minimalist set were also effective in establishing the mood of the show. Most of the characters’ attire was based on the grunge stylistic movement, emphasizing this time period of the late 90s as an important part of *Rent*’s story. For modern audiences, especially millennials who were not born or very young during the AIDS epidemic of the ‘80s to ‘90s, a world where having HIV or AIDS made you a social outcast and the prospect of finding a long-term treatment was just a dream seems distant.

Yet, this was reality for Larson’s characters and actual individuals living at this time, which the cast members of *Rent* detailed in the opening of Act II, when the lead actors shared past and current statistics about HIV and AIDS and how it affects certain communities more than others, includ-

ing people of color and the homeless. The look of the show in general brought me back to this cultural moment, where the rock industry was plagued by heroin addictions and people wore second-hand clothing out of necessity, not for a specific look.

Every member of the cast and crew contributed to the success of the play, but I do want to draw attention to some standout performances. Mike Chance and Rachel Estrada, who played Roger and Mimi, were fantastic. They had good on-stage chemistry and excellent singing chops.

Their talent and passion made their narrative arc one of the best features of the rock opera. Other showstopper moments were “Contact,” “Santa Fe” and “Tango: Maureen,” and of course, the touching finale, made even more poignant by the appearance of Angel, played by Fred Carlton, who the spotlight shown on as the last image of

the show. There were very few mishaps during the performance. On the Saturday matinee performance, “Take Me or Leave Me” fell a little flat, as it seemed that the actresses had difficulty keeping up with the band for this song. Additionally, the staging of “Happy New Year” made it difficult to hear much of the dialogue, and although Jon Vazquez was a very emotive and talented singer, technical difficulties made it difficult to hear him throughout the production.

Other than these minor shortcomings, Players’ production of *Rent* was one of the best things I have seen on campus, including the performances by the Department of Theater and Dance. It was inspiring to see the actors, musicians and crew put their all into making this important show not only a smash, but one that I certainly won’t forget.

Student Artist Highlight

Filmmaker Milos Blazin



Photo courtesy of Milos Blazin

What is your biggest motivation?

I’m going to assume you are referring to the motivation for my field of study. It would be the thrill of making something new, making art and, at the same time, reaching a vast amount of people. That is partly why I came to America, too; to see and learn what is the filmmaking process in a leading country when film is concerned.

How has Montclair State University fostered you as an artist?

It gave me the opportunity to meet some wonderful new people and get to know how they approach to the craft of making movies, I have to say, on a far better level than in my country. But, of course, the financial standing of the university has a lot to do with it. Nevertheless, kids really take their filmmaking major seriously here and know a lot. I’m glad I witnessed that and will be bringing home some fresh opinions. Also, equipment enabled me to make visually high-quality material.

Who are your biggest supporters?

That would be my international student friends (we all live together on two floors) and my professors. Whenever I need help from friends, they are gladly offering it and this means a lot because, as a student from abroad, I don't have many resources available to me. Professors are highly interactive, answer all questions, give letters of recommendations, stay in touch with us and help in whatever way they can.

Who are your biggest inspirations?

There are a lot, but the most recent ones from my experience here are debut producers and directors that all have the same message: No matter what, just keep making movies, shows and audio-visual content in general. They are true inspirations to us as young filmmakers. Also, I find the idea of telling people my opinion through making moving pictures very interesting.

What's your latest project?

My latest project was making a promo video for a musical trio called BAH. They are going to use it to apply to some classical music festivals. Since we had only one day to make it, by the circumstances, I'm very happy how it turned out. They are amazing musicians. Search “BAH Trio- Neue Musik goes public”; if you like it, click like, because the competition is still on.

Euripides’ Play Revels Across Campus

Successful performances despite low budget

Zachary Case
Asst. Copy Editor



Students performing the *Bacchae* on April 24.



Photos courtesy of Joanna Madloch

The Department of Classics and General Humanities/College of Humanities and Social Sciences-sponsored performance of Euripides' *Bacchae* was performed in the Kasser Amphitheater on April 23 and 24. The arrival of rain resulted in the cancellation of the performance on April 22, but the actors pressed on despite the unexpected snow on Thursday and the sub-optimal temperature on Friday.

The authenticity of the play was one of the most well-done aspects of the performance. Electronics were limited to two speakers and a handful of microphones for amplification of Dionysos' initial announcement and some singing and instrumentation during the chorus sections; sound effects such as the crack of thunder and the crumbling of rock also played through the speakers at key points

throughout the performance. The costume design was colorful and well-put together; nothing particularly seemed anachronistic.

The acting was generally well-executed and fitting for the nature of the play; any hamminess that had occurred wasn't particularly out of place considering the nature of Greek theater and the need for projection and nobody under-acted or recited lines. Prop failure that occurred when one of the messengers broke her walking stick didn't provoke any reaction from any of the cast members, including the holder of the stick herself; it is to the actors' credit to maintain face during an unexpected event such as this.

Immersion into the play was helped by the environment and interaction with the audience by actors. Dionysos descended from the top steps of the amphitheater onto the stage at

the play's start and children playing the roles of animal messengers were sent out into the audience to question if they had seen a man slated for execution.

Those who were seated on the steps of the theater had access to interesting viewing angles thanks to the curved nature of the steps; I couldn't see most of the prop built for Pentheus' remains when they were brought out, so I was left to fill in the blanks as to what the mangled remains of the king looked like instead of seeing that they were just an indiscriminate object wrapped in a shroud, later revealed to me to be a Buzz Lightyear doll.

What worked against the play was its nature as a College of Humanities play as opposed to a Players production. The costumes generally looked good, but the props looked a bit cheap and the choreography was

a little shaky in the beginning; this is more the result of not having the Student Government Association backing the play than the fault of any students in the production, as Players productions generally have more time and budget put into them beyond the student level.

The singing in the chorus sections was unfortunately off-key at times, although part of the reason for that may be that the music was modal in nature and thus not using the scales most singers use on a regular basis.

Overall, the performance went well considering its small-scale nature; here's to hoping there will be more performances and exposure of Greek plays at Montclair State, as well as other varieties of shows beyond musicals and Shakespeare productions.

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Who Needs Anything Else With Friends Like These

Local band set to release second single off of debut album



Photos courtesy of Dylan Keir.

Samantha King
Asst. Entertainment Editor

One of North Jersey’s local bands, With Friends Like These, is set to release their debut album before the end of the year. With their first single “Arcadia” already having over 5,000 plays on YouTube, WFLT is the latest band on the local music scene you need to be looking out for.

Originating in Roxbury, N.J., With Friends Like These is comprised of Phil Cap on vocals and bass, Joe Turpin on guitar and backup vocals, Keir on guitar and Eric Decker on drums and screaming.

Stylistically, WFLT is defying modern standards of committing to a specific genre by embracing a truly unique sound. Although they can broadly be identified as pop punk, WFLT brings more to the table with acoustic crescendos, screaming as complimentary backup vocals and thoughtfully poetic lyrics.

With Friends Like These spent five weeks in Florida recording their first album with Andrew Wade, who has produced for The Ghost Inside, Issues and A Day to Remember.

Their second single, titled “February,” will be released within the next few weeks. “February” opens with acoustics, which was recorded on the same acoustic guitar A Day to Remember uses on their hit “If It Means a Lot to You.” Keir said that “February” is one of his favorite tracks on the new album for many reasons, but most specifically due to the expressive lyrics.

“We wanted to make sure that the lyrics we’re writing aren’t just things you hear all the time. We wanted to write things that matter to us more poetically than just being really straightforward,” said Keir in an interview at a local Starbucks.

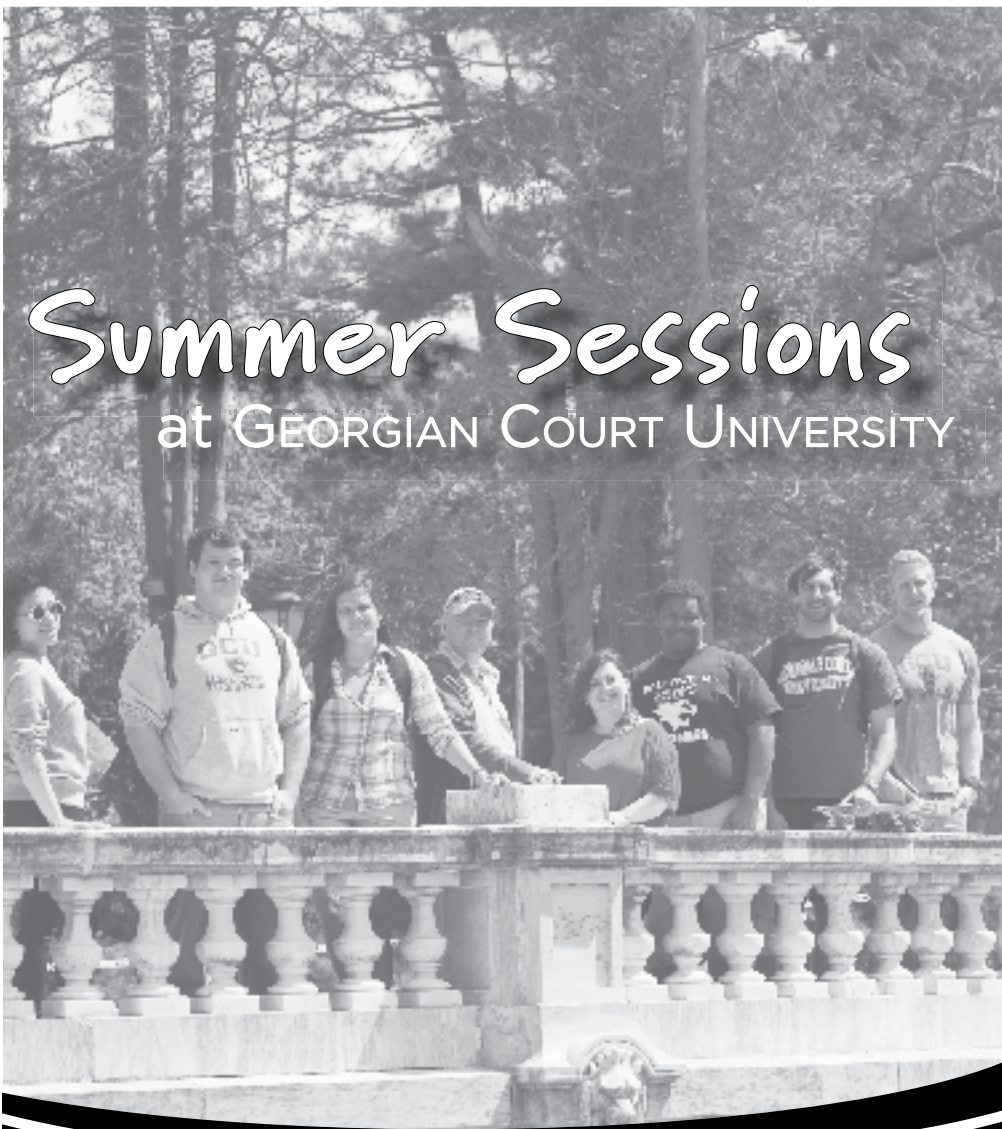
Keir explained that having band practice three to four times a week is always a blast for him because he’s playing music that he loves with his best friends.

WFLT has a Twitter account with over 12,000 followers and hilarious tweets. Make sure to check out and follow With Friends Like These on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to stay up to date with their latest shows and releases.

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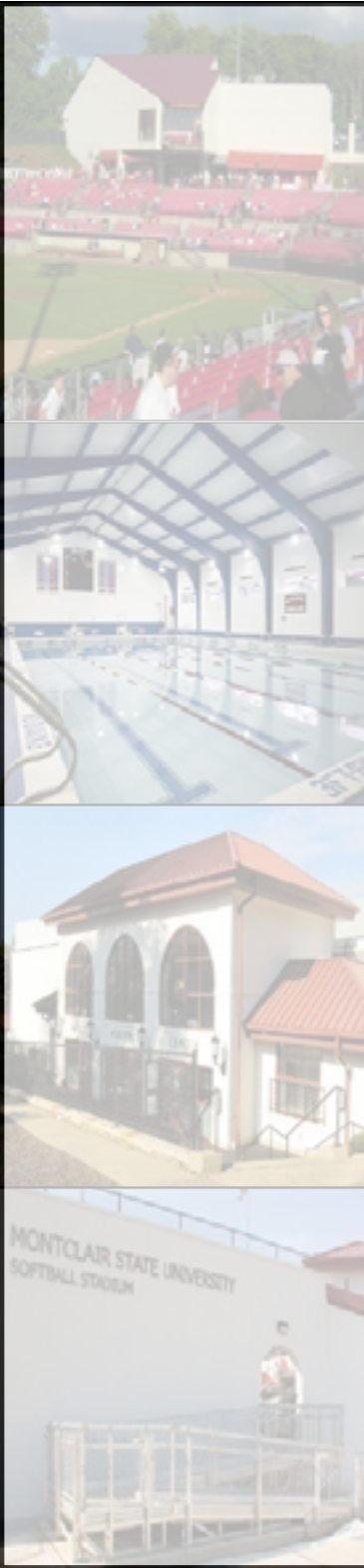
Montclarionchief@gmail.com

**THE WORLD
WITHOUT
NEWS
WOULD BE...**



Photo courtesy of wikipedia.org.

Red Hawk Roundup



Women’s Lacrosse

The women’s lacrosse team ended their season with two wins over Elmira College and Rutgers-Camden to push their record to 10-5. Montclair State will play Rowan University in the NJAC Semifinals on April 29. *The Montclarion* was unable to acquire the results for the games on April 29 before publication.

Baseball

The Red Hawks ended their season 1-2 this past week and lost to Kean University in the first game in the NJAC Championship. They’ll be playing Rutgers-Camden in a consolation game on May 1. The Red Hawks are currently 17-17 on the season.



Men’s Lacrosse

The men’s lacrosse team closed their season with wins over Kean University and College of Mount Saint Vincent to improve their record to 11-5. The Red Hawks will play Farmingdale State College in the Sky-line Conference Semifinal on April 29. *The Montclarion* was unable to acquire the results for the games on April 29 before publication.

Track & Field

In Ewing, N.J., Robert O’Shaughnessy placed fifth in the hammer throw for men’s track and field. For the women’s team, Lia Negra placed second in the javelin. The men’s and women’s teams will be competing in the NJAC Championship this weekend.



WHO’S HOT THIS WEEK



Tierney Conlon
Women’s Lacrosse

Conlon earned NJAC Player of the Week as she helped the Red Hawks to a pair of wins and MSU’s clinching of the #2 seed in the NJAC Tournament.

CURRENT STATS
GOALS: 29
ASSISTS: 43
SHOTS ON GOAL: 41



Christopher Reynolds
Baseball

Reynolds was the lone Montclair State representative in the NJAC All-Conference Team. This is the first time the senior has earned this accolade.

CAREER STATS
BATTING AVERAGE: .350
RBI: 60
GAMES PLAYED: 80

UPCOMING EVENTS

Women’s Lacrosse
May 2 - NJAC Championship - TBA

Outdoor Track and Field
May 2 - 3 - NJAC Championship
Mahwah, N.J.

Baseball
May 1 vs. Rutgers-Camden - 12 p.m.
Union, N.J.

Men’s Lacrosse
May 2 - Skyline Conference Championship - TBA

European Soccer Roundup

Thomas Formoso
Sports Editor



UEFA Champions League

The Semifinals of the 2015 UEFA Champions League are now set. With four quarterfinal matches finishing their second legs on April 21 and April 22, it was Real Madrid (Spain), Barcelona (Spain), Bayern Munich (Germany) and Juventus (Italy) that found themselves one step from playing the Champions League Final in Germany.

The battle for Madrid reached its boiling point as Atletico Madrid and Real Madrid met in Real's stadium after a scoreless first game at Atletico. Arda Turan made a costly mistake, was double-booked and sent off with a red card, which put Atletico in a hole. Mexican international Javier Hernandez scored the winning goal for Real in the 88' to push them to the Semifinal.

After scoring the lone goal of the first leg via a penalty shot in Turin, Italy, Juventus traveled to France and shut down Monaco. Juventus continues to utilize pure Italian defending techniques and forced a 0-0 draw in the second leg (1-0 aggregate).

FC Porto managed to pull off a surprising 3-1 score in the

first leg at home in Portugal, but Bayern went on to obliterate them in Germany, 6-1. Bayern advanced on aggregate 7-4.

Barcelona continued their dominance of PSG with a 2-0 win in Spain and advanced on a 5-1 aggregate.

The semifinals will feature Real Madrid vs. Juventus and Barcelona vs. Bayern Munich.



Liga BBVA

After a weekend that saw Barcelona and Real Madrid continue to roll on against Celta Vigo and Espanyol, Barcelona successfully won their mid-week clash against lowly Getafe, 6-0. Real Madrid faces Almeria on April 29. *The Montclarion* was unable to acquire the results for the games on April 29 before publication.

In the relegation battle, Deportivo de la Coruna, who needs a win to have a chance to move out of 18th which is the first relegation place, will face 15th-place Elche. They will have a great chance of finishing the round outside of the red with Almeria facing Real Madrid. Eibar, currently in 16th place, will face 5th-place Sevilla as Eibar is now only two points above the relegation line.

Sevilla is currently breathing down the neck of 4th-place Valencia for the final Champions

League position. Valencia, who only has a two point lead over Sevilla, will be playing 11th-place Rayo Vallecano.



Serie A TIM

While the Italian league will play a lot of their mid-week fixtures on April 29, Inter and Udinese met on April 28. Inter came away with a 2-1 win after Udinese dug themselves into a deep hole with two red cards over the course of the game.

This weekend, Champions League Semifinalists Juventus face 5th-place Sampdoria who are fighting for a Europa League position. Juventus could decide to field a weaker team to keep players rested for their Semifinal clash against Real Madrid next Tuesday.

Lazio, Roma and Napoli find themselves in a three-way battle for second with only three points separating the three teams. Second-place Lazio will face 17th-place Atalanta, third-place Roma will face 15th-place Sassuolo and fourth-place Napoli faces 16th-place Empoli. Cagliari, Cesena and Parma find themselves in a deep hole as they are in serious danger of being relegated.



UEFA Europa League

Italian sides Napoli and Fiorentina, Ukranian side Dnipro and defending Europa League Champions Sevilla have found themselves one step away from the Final.

Dnipro disposed of Belgian-side Club Brugge with a 1-0 finish in the second leg that took place in Ukraine. Dynamo Kiev, the other Ukrainian team that made the Quarterfinals, traveled to Italy to face Fiorentina but the Italian team came away with a 2-0 win and 3-1 aggregate win.

Napoli and Wolfsburg (Germany) met in their second leg and Napoli staved off elimination with a 2-2 draw in Italy and a 6-3 aggregate win. Zenit Petersburg (Russia) and Sevilla drew 2-2 in Russia, but Sevilla had banked enough goals in the first leg to advance on aggregate 4-3.

On May 7, the first legs of the Semifinals will take place, with the second legs taking place on May 14. Dnipro will be taking on Napoli, while Sevilla was drawn against Fiorentina. With the all-important UEFA coefficient, an all-Italian Final in the Europa League and Juventus' potential Final berth, Italy can reap the rewards in that department.



Fussball-Bundesliga

This week, Bayern Munich dealt with the tough news that they will be without Dutch legend Arjen Robben, but it won't affect their Bundesliga title hopes. Munich is currently 15 points ahead of second-place Wolfsburg. Munich has had another impressive season at 24-4-2 and will face fourth-place Bayer Leverkusen on May 2. Leverkusen is currently fighting with Borussia Monchengladbach for a Champions League Group Stage position. Monchengladbach will face 13th-place Hertha Berlin.

A resurgence by VfB Stuttgart has left them just two points out of relegation. The two other relegation teams above them, Hamburger SV and Paderborn, are just a point ahead. Stuttgart has a tough game against 5th-place Schalke, while 17th-place Paderborn will face 14th-place Freiburg. Freiburg finds themselves just two points out of relegation. 16th-place Hamburger will face 10th-place Mainz. Hannover, who is in 15th place, is facing second-place Wolfsburg and are only a point out of relegation. The bottom five teams are about to undergo a lot of shuffling.

Professional Standings

Barclays Premier League

1. Chelsea - 77 points
2. Manchester City - 67 points
3. Arsenal - 67 points
4. Manchester U. - 65 points
5. Liverpool - 58 points
6. Tottenham - 58 points
7. Southampton - 57 points
8. Swansea - 50 points
9. Stoke City - 47 points
10. Everton - 44 points
11. West Ham - 44 points
12. Crystal Palace - 42 points
13. West Brom - 37 points
14. Newcastle Utd. - 35 points
15. Hull City - 34 points
16. Aston Villa - 32 points
17. Leicester - 31 points
18. Sunderland - 30 points
19. QPR - 27 points
20. Burnley - 26 points

Round 35 - 5/2 - 5/4

MLS

Eastern Conference

1. N.E. Revolution - 14 points
2. D.C. United - 14 points
3. New York Red Bulls - 12 points
4. Columbus Crew -11 points
5. Chicago Fire - 9 points
6. Orlando City - 8 points
7. Toronto FC - 6 points
8. New York City - 6 points
9. Philadelphia Union - 6 points
10. Montreal Impact - 2 points

Western Conference

1. Vancouver - 16 points
2. FC Dallas - 14 points
3. Seattle Sounders - 13 points
4. Los Angeles Galaxy - 12 points
5. Houston Dynamo - 10 points
6. Sporting Kansas City - 10 points
7. San Jose Earthquakes - 9 points
8. Portland Timbers - 9 points
9. Real Salt Lake - 9 points
10. Colorado Rapids - 7 points

NHL

2015 Stanley Cup Playoffs

Eastern Conference Semifinals

New York Rangers
Washington Capitals

Montreal Canadiens
Tampa Bay/Detroit - Gm. 7 - 4/29

Western Conference Semifinals

Minnesota Wild
Chicago Blackhawks

Calgary Flames
Anaheim Ducks

MLB

NL East

1. New York Mets - 0 GB
2. Atlanta Braves - 4.5 GB
3. Miami Marlins - 6 GB
4. Philadelphia Phillies - 7 GB
5. Washington Nationals - 7 GB

AL East

1. New York Yankees - 0 GB
2. Boston Red Sox - 2 GB
3. Tampa Bay Rays - 2 GB
4. Toronto Blue Jays - 3 GB
5. Baltimore Orioles - 3 GB

NBA

2015 NBA Playoffs

Eastern Conference Quarterfinals

Brooklyn Nets (2)
Atlanta Hawks (2)
- Game 5 - 4/29
- Game 6 - 5/1
- Game 7 - 5/3*

Toronto Raptors (0)
Washington Wizards (4)

Chicago Bulls (3)
Milwaukee Bucks (2)
- Game 6 - 4/30
- Game 7 - 5/2*

Cleveland Cavaliers (4)
Boston Celtics (0)

Western Conference Quarterfinals

Golden State Warriors (4)
New Orleans Pelicans (0)

Houston Rockets (4)
Dallas Mavericks (1)

San Antonio Spurs (3)
Los Angeles Clippers (2)
- Game 6 - 4/30
- Game 7 - 5/2*

Portland Trail Blazers (1)
Memphis Grizzlies (3)
- Game 5 - 4/29
- Game 6 - 5/1*
- Game 7 - 5/3*

* - If Necessary

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Dispatches from Red Hawks Abroad Blog

<https://blogs.montclair.edu/studyabroad>

Our blogspace is updated by students who are studying abroad. You'll find a nice variety of student viewpoints, majors and destinations and photos from their adventures abroad.

Summer Hours

Our office is open during the summer! Starting in June, our hours are Monday – Thursday, 8:00 am – 5:30 pm. E-mail Nyieta Charlot, charlotn@mail.montclair.edu to schedule an appointment to begin planning for study abroad programs in spring 2016 and beyond.

Global Education Center
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Softball Shows Pride in Closing Game

MSU finishes season with their head held high

Mike Panepinto
Staff Writer

The Montclair State softball team probably won't consider this one of their best years in terms of their record. What they can say is that this group fought until the end.

The Red Hawks ended their season at 13-22 overall and 5-13 in the New Jersey Athletic Conference. They finished tied for seventh in the conference with Stockton and Rutgers-Newark.

The Red Hawks hosted The College of New Jersey at the MSU Softball Stadium for an NJAC doubleheader on April 24. Junior pitcher/captain Brooke Powers allowed three runs, six hits and struck out two.

Freshman infielder Alana Luna homered for Montclair State in the fifth inning to tie the game 1-1 at that point. Senior infielder Brianna Davidson had a double in the sixth to drive in the Red Hawks' other run. Freshman infielder Noel



Montclair State closed out their regular season last week.

Photo courtesy of MSU Sports

Hodgins finished the game with two hits.

The Red Hawks never found their groove in the second game and lost 11-5. Powers surrendered 11 runs, 14

hits and one walk. She led the offense with two RBIs and one hit. Luna, Hodgins, infielder Melissa Rustemeyer and outfielder Lauren Guillen each had two hits in the contest. David-

son was responsible for Montclair State's other RBI.

The next day, April 25, Montclair State closed out their NJAC schedule at Kean University. Although the Red Hawks fought tough, it was like déjà vu, as they lost the first game 3-2. Powers gave up three runs on eight hits and struck out one. Powers and Guillen provided the offense with two hits and one RBI apiece. Guillen and Hodgins each scored a run for MSU.

In the second match, Montclair State could not put enough consecutive hits together and lost 8-1. Powers was charged with eight runs, 12 hits and three walks. Davidson had a great second game, going 3 for 3 and scored on the Red Hawks' only run. Powers tallied another two hits for herself in Game 2. Rustemeyer drove in Montclair State's lone RBI.

The Red Hawks closed out their season at home on Tuesday, April 28 with a one-game contest against the De-

Sales Bulldogs. MSU fought valiantly on their Senior Day, but lost 5-4. Powers allowed five runs on 10 hits and struck out two. Powers' final record at the end of the season was 11-18. Powers and senior infielder/captain Melany Zeller each had one hit and two RBIs. Hodgins and Luna both had solid games with two hits each.

Head coach Anita Kubicka was very reflective on this season. She knows that her team will be better in the future and that you have your good years and your bad years.

"The season has been complicated," said Kubicka. "A lack of experience and multiple injuries have hampered our ability to play consistent, errorless softball. I do not think our sub .500 win-loss record is a lack of effort. I believe it's due to a lack of consistency and composure."

2015 NFL Draft Preview

Giants and Cowboys face tough decisions

Daniel Waffendorf
Contributing Writer

The New York Giants have the ninth overall pick in this year's 2015 NFL Draft. There has been a lot of speculation about what they're going to do with their pick. Based on this offseason's departures and signings, I believe there are some positions they need to fill in order to rebuild their team and establish success in this year's draft class.

After last year's disappointing 6-10 season, the Giants finished in third place in the NFC East while missing the playoffs. There is still hope that this franchise can provide a turning point and improve into this upcoming season. The Giants should select a safety, offensive lineman, defensive lineman and an outside linebacker.

Last year was a down season for the Giants because they led the league with most players on the injured reserve list and they could use some healthy and skillful players that can contribute to the team since some members on the team didn't execute like they should have.

So far, this offseason has gone well for the Giants, as they made some major signings like Brett Jones, Shane Vereen, J.T. Thomas, Dwayne Harris and others. Everything has been going in the Giants' favor and with the right draft picks, they can take a major step up from last season.

General Manager Jerry Reese feels confident with next year's team, especially since Victor Cruz is coming back from a leg injury that ended his season. "It is just a matter of continu-



Photo courtesy of NFL.

ing to get stronger, get the leg stronger to be able to start cutting and things like that," said Cruz in an interview with NFL Network's Brian Baldinger. "I do feel like I am definitely close to that."

If Cruz and the other injured Giants regain their health, then this team has a lot of promise to increase their wins from last season. Although the Giants have some tough competition next season, many people think they will have a chance to make the playoffs. Tom Coughlin is going into his 11th year as head coach of the Giants and has structured this team in a way that has more character and finesse than usual.

The Giants defense was banged up last season with injuries and poor performances. With some youth, it could help bring some mobility to the defense. This draft class can help define the future for the G-Men going forward. The draft will be held on Thursday, April 30 in Chicago at 8 p.m.

Jenna Bussiere
Assistant Sports Editor

The Dallas Cowboys won't make their first pick until the 27th overall, which could greatly impact the areas they need to fill.

After releasing DeMarco Murray this offseason, the clear position that needs reviving is their running back, where the top prospects for this position will most likely be gone by the time Dallas can make their first pick.

Therefore, it should be definite that Jerry Jones and the Cowboys staff grab the best running back that's still hanging around by the 27th round.

The top three prospects that are projected to be available when the Cowboys make their first pick include Todd Gurley out of Georgia, Melvin Gordon from Wisconsin and Tevin Coleman out of Indiana.

Considered to be the best out of the bunch, Todd Gurley draws both positive and nega-

tives for the team. The only reason he should still be around by this round is because he's haunted by an ACL injury, which is the last thing the Cowboys want for a spot they're so desperate to fill.

However, working with him patiently with this injury means they can mold him into the kind of running back other teams will be mad they passed up on.

Despite Gurley's successful run at Georgia, my pick for the running back spot for the 2015 draft is Melvin Gordon.

The Cowboys should take a guy that's fresh and already has the natural ability to slide right into their offense, considering his play at Wisconsin.

He's used to running rep after rep, much like the Cowboys did with Murray and he's used to finding the small holes that zone blocking opens up, which was the biggest contributor to the Cowboys' successful running game last season. To me, he's the ultimate pick and we can only hope he's around by pick 27.

Another spot the Cowboys will look to take early is at cornerback. As we've seen, Morris Claiborne, their first pick in the 2012 draft at 6th overall, hasn't quite lived up to his hype and suffered from a season-ending injury last fall.

Although Orlando Scandrick, a veteran Cowboy who's been around since 2008, has shown growth and stability in the position, a solid corner is needed to take this defense to this next level.

Some of the top prospects for Dallas in 2015 include Marcus Peters from Washington, Kevin Johnson out of Wake Forest and Florida State's P.J. Williams. Also, speculated as one of the biggest targets by Dallas for a corner is Josh Shaw, the USC defender who sparked a controversy this year lying about why he jumped off a balcony and sprained both of his ankles. I'm not particularly rooting for Shaw to be picked up by the Cowboys, but if his maturity can grow to match his talent, he should make a good fit.

Of course, there are several other areas for concern that the Cowboys may look to fill. There's need for a linebacker, defensive end and maybe they should even bring up a solid back-up at quarterback for Tony Romo, whose arm and shoulder can be a big liability.

The Cowboys made an awesome first-round pick last year with center Zack Martin, who went on to see all-pro his first year in the league. Hopefully, this year, we'll see similar success with the draft.

